

# Lassen County Child Welfare System Improvement Plan September 30, 2004

## **I. Introduction**

The Lassen County Child Welfare System Improvement plan, developed in compliance with the California Child and Family Services Review, is a product of the Lassen County child welfare community stakeholders workgroup and facilitation by Community Service Solutions. This is the same workgroup that assisted in the completion of the Lassen County Self Assessment. Their contribution to the redesign process is a testament to the strength of the community and their commitment to the children of Lassen County. Despite all of the problems the Lassen County children's protective services program has been criticized for in the past ten years the work of the community organizations has flourished and grown. In the midst of the flailing CPS program the community has gone about its purpose in developing a strong collaborative network of prevention and early intervention services for its children. These organizations have been the backbone of the system of services for Lassen children. They will continue in their role of providing oversight to the CPS redesign.

The Lassen County AB 636 redesign process got off to a delayed start and began at a major crisis point in the Child Protective Services program. The Self Assessment process began the first of June 2004, right as the Director of the Lassen Children and Families Protective Services Department went out on extended medical leave. The Department was left with no director, no manager, no first line supervisor and only four of the eight social worker positions filled. Staff workloads were unmanageable and there was no leadership whatsoever. Fortunately for Lassen County, this crisis became the opportunity for the beginning of a real turnaround in the Lassen CPS program. From that point in June positive administrative and systemic changes began to restructure the program into one that has already in July begun to meet the compliance requirements of the state program regulations. They have moved very quickly to reengineer the program and lay plans to address all of the long standing program failings. The AB 636 Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan were developed and documented in the midst of all these changes. The workgroup has been able to discern the sense amongst the chaos and grasp the planning that the department has undertaken. And out of all of this a real connection between the community and the department has developed and a partnership formed to work collaboratively with the community in addressing the needs of the Lassen County children and families. In the process of meeting the AB 636 California Child and Family Services Review requirements a benefit byproduct has been the renewed relationship that has occurred between the community and the CPS program. The following report is submitted with these factors in context.

## **II. Lassen County System Strengths and Weaknesses.**

### **Lassen Child Welfare System Strengths:**

#### **1. Community collaboration.**

One of the strengths of Lassen County is the initiative that the community has taken to address the needs of their children through planning and collaboration. The community has done an exceptional job in developing programs to address the needs of their children and provide early prevention services to develop safe healthy families. There has not been a coordinated strategic plan to develop a prevention system throughout the county but rather through self initiated community efforts a very effective system of services has been developed that addresses prevention and builds community. They have family resource centers that are true community collaborations, they have strong community based organizations providing key services like Lassen Family Services and Crossroads, and they have county departments and the education system providing well designed treatment and prevention services, like the Probation Alternatives in a Community Environment, Promises, and the Bridges program. Even the Foster Family Agencies, Mountain Circle and Environmental Alternatives, have been active participants in the community collaboration. The Lassen County collaborative network is one of a progressive, caring, involved community working together to build a better future for their children. These services have been developed out of the community's concern to "do the right thing for their children". It is this kind of community involvement that holds well for a secure future for the Lassen County children. The full scope of these programs are cited in the AB 636 June 2004 CPS Redesign document in the section titled, *"County Wide Prevention Activities and Strategies."*

#### **2. Strong Administration leadership committed to improving the child welfare system.**

The change in administration of the CPS program was the pivotal step in addressing the historic dysfunction and poor performance of the program. This change in administration was the result of a crisis when the Department Director went out on extended medical leave and the Department was left with no administrator, manager, or supervisor to direct the program. The crisis then became the opportunity for significant program and organizational deficiencies to be addressed. The new leadership was able to quickly assess the program performance and develop an administrative plan to begin to address the deficiencies. In a matter of two days new resources were brought into the system to begin to adequately provide the manpower to carry out the CPS program responsibilities and begin the restructuring of the program. The administration attitude was positive and confident which provided promise and security to staff in a very difficult situation. The administration also took on an objective approach to the situation using proven management techniques to assess and develop an action plan for the ailing program which also provided a sense of security and confidence to the staff. Outside consultants were used in the assessment process, a Deputy Director was appointed over the Department and an experienced CPS supervisor was brought in to work directly with staff.

Direct contact with the State Child Welfare Services division was established to assist in the restructuring process. The administration has also committed to working with the community in building partnerships and participating in the redesign process to continuously improve the child welfare system for Lassen County.

### **Lassen Child Welfare System Weaknesses.**

#### **1. The first area identified is the staffing.**

“The department has had a recent history of high turnover, high vacancy rate, and lack of experienced social workers. In the last year there has been a 100% turn over in social worker staff. Currently there are 4 social workers out of 8 positions for a 50% vacancy rate. Three of the social workers are social worker I’s and one social worker has a master’s degree in social work and is a social worker IV. The highest seniority social worker in the department has nine months as of June 2004. The next highest seniority is four months, then three months and one month. As of the beginning of June 2004 there were 206 open cases that the 4 social workers were responsible for managing. The social workers carried integrated caseloads so were responsible for the full spectrum of program services, from intake to permanent plan. Some social workers carried over 60 cases, extremely high in consideration of the 1999 AB 2030 workload study which set recommended caseload standards. With the high caseload level one of the social workers had to complete an average of one court report per day over a one month period on top of their other required case management activities. The social workers are also responsible for the after hours emergency hotline response.”

“With only 4 social workers in the department, basic program coverage borders on the unmanageable. Priorities are developed jeopardizing the basic program integrity. Social workers may find themselves in the place of choosing whether to respond to an ER, complete and file a court report, or making a mandatory home visit all on top of the case management crisis that occur daily. This puts key program components in competition for the limited social worker resources and has created an extreme workforce issue for CPS. The longest seniority CPS social worker has nine months in Lassen County. The lack of experience and understaffing has made workload management a critical problem and impacted program compliance issues. Both safety outcomes and wellbeing outcomes have been seriously compromised. Direct services to the community have been impacted and as a result complaints from the community have been made.”

*(Excerpts from Section II, Characteristics)*

#### **2. The second area identified is the lack of a first line supervisor.**

There has been no first line supervisor for the past 12 months. There has been no program manager for the past 24 months.

“At the time of the Director’s departure the department also had no program manager or first line supervisor; the Director had been fulfilling both those vacant

roles while also carrying a caseload of approximately 30 cases and maintaining the Director's responsibilities."

*(Excerpt from Section II, Characteristics)*

With new inexperienced staff it is critical to have a first line supervisor available for technical guidance and professional mentoring. The supervisor also ensures consistency in policy application and monitors individual's performance.

### **3. The third area identified is lack of staff training.**

The CPS social worker must be a master of many trades, from social worker, to counselor, to investigator, to paralegal, to service coordinator, to crisis manager. It takes extensive training to be qualified and prepared to master all of these areas, and that training must be provided to enable the social worker professional competency. Not only must the UC Davis Regional CORE training be provided but additional training in the local system requirements provided.

Additional to training staff they must be well equipped in the professional tools of the trade – which are: CWS State Division 31 regulations, Lassen County CWS policies and procedures manual, State issued All County Letters, a condensed court relevant Welfare and Institutions Code booklet or court handbook, relevant Penal Code and Health and Safety Code regulations, relevant MOUs with agency partners, and the county personnel manual.

The social workers each have a desktop computer on their desk but lack any technology innovations that could make their job easier and more efficient. This is an area certainly worth exploring for program efficiency.

### **4. The fourth area identified is a new intake system.**

Current best practice is the utilization of a multidisciplinary intake system with specialized staff. Staff dedicated to the intake process and the use of a risk assessment tool for the new referrals. This also separates the staff dedicated to the other programs in CPS, family maintenance, family reunification and permanent plan. Social work staff may also be assigned workload according to experience and gradually work into learning the whole system. The intake process would also make the workload more manageable for all staff since they would only have to focus in on their ongoing cases or the intake cases. The ongoing social workers could then avoid much of the disruption that prevents them from making their home visits and reassessments, thus meeting one of the critical safety elements of children in placement.

### **5. The fifth area identified is the development of program policy in relation to engaging the family in the service plan and consistency of a uniform family assessment.**

A clear public policy must be established and communicated addressing these issues. Are families to be part of the plan, how are they to be engaged and to

what extent will they be required to participate? A clear strategy and policy needs to be developed and related to the social workers.

**6. The sixth area identified is the provision of adequate services.**

Are services in the community adequate to meet the needs of the families Lassen County serves? Do other services need to be developed to ensure the building of healthy families? Are out of county placements receiving adequate services? How can we meet these needs?

**7. The seventh area identified is managing the out of county placement and developing in county placements.**

There are only a limited number of foster home placements within Lassen County. Many of the children in placement end up out of county and sometimes long distances away. How can we develop more local resources for foster homes within the county? This would keep children close to their family and friends and assist in the reunification process.

**8. The eighth area identified is collaboration with the community system partners and development of a coordinated prevention plan.**

The Child Protective Services department has been noticeably absent from the collaborative work of the community. Many positive ties can be easily built to better serve the Lassen County children and strengthen the community network. Additionally, the participation of the CPS program in community collaboration will go a long way in changing the public image of the department.

**9. The ninth area identified is managing the fiscal demands of the system.**

There are many issues around this area. Rising costs of placements, need for additional staff, need for additional services, improving current services. A strategy must be developed around maximizing funds and utilizing all the funding possible for Lassen County.

**10. The tenth area identified is ensuring youth are transitioned from foster care to adulthood and self sufficiency.**

“There is a sizeable number of children receiving transitional services, however, the children are not completing high school, completing vocational services, or obtaining employment. Only 50% of the children in ILP transition to an identified outcome in the program. The traditional means of providing ILP services need to be reviewed and rethought through the redesign process. It is very difficult for 16 to 20 year olds to navigate the transition to adulthood and self sufficiency even in the best of circumstances. In many ways the system continues to fail the needs of the children in its care when this adulthood transition is not effectively addressed. These measurements must improve to address breaking the cycle of abuse in children.”

*(Excerpt from Section III, Systemic)*

## Lassen System Improvement Plan

### Outcome/Systemic Factor #1

**Staffing:** Fill all CPS program staff vacancies. Fill all social worker vacancies, fill administrator position, fill manager position, fill supervisor position. Develop a staffing plan to adequately staff all components of the CPS program given the systemic changes incorporated in the system improvement plan and the unique demographics of Lassen County.

**Target = reasonable caseloads.**

- Recruit staff to fill all positions and utilize multidisciplinary case staffings. July 1, 2004.
- Fast track staff recruitment with Merit System and County Personnel Department. July 1, 2004.
- Utilize consulting services to assist in recruitment. August 1, 2004.
- Develop a staffing plan to adequately staff all components of the CPS program given the systemic changes incorporated in the system improvement plan and the unique demographics of Lassen County. October 1, 2004.

### Indicators:

#### **Safety:**

Timely Response to Referrals.

Goal: 90% Federal Requirement

Per cent of child abuse/neglect referrals with a timely response.	
October 2004	
July 2004	80%
May 2004	0%

Timely Social Worker Visits.

Goal: 90% Federal Requirement

Of all children who required a monthly social worker visit, how many received a monthly visit?	
October 2004	
July 2004	85%
May 2004	0%

Recurrence of Maltreatment.

Goal: 10.7%

Recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months after first substantiated allegation.	
October 2004	
10/1/01-9/30/02	15.4%

**Permanency:**

Exit Reunification

Goal: 53.2%

Children who entered FC for the first time what per cent were reunified within 12 months?	
October 2004	
10/1/01-9/30/02	80.9%

FC to Adoption

Goal: 18%

Children who entered FC for the first time what per cent were adopted within 24 months?	
October 2004	
10/1/00-9/30/01	3.5%

FC Re-entry

Goal: 10.7%

% who re-entered within 12 months of reunification.	
October 2004	
10/1/00-9/30/01	17.6%

**Well Being:**

Children to Self Sufficiency

Number who received services.	
10/1/02-9/30/03	110
High School Diploma	10
Enrolled in College/Higher Education	5
Completed Vocational Training	4
Employed or other means of support	31

Number who received services.	
10/1/01-9/30/02	86
High School Diploma	9
Enrolled in College/Higher Education	4
Completed Vocational Training	8
Employed or other means of support	17

**Outcome/Systemic Factor #2**

Reorganize staff into intake and ongoing. Implement a new intake system with a multidisciplinary review/assessment of “high risk” referrals. Implement use of the structured decision making assessment tool throughout the system. Emphasize intake process to identify and address family needs immediately utilizing preventative/early intervention services.

- Implement a multidisciplinary intake system involving Behavioral Health, Drug and Alcohol, Systems of Care, Public Health, other community based organizations. July 1, 2004.
- Separate staff functions into “intake” and “ongoing”. July 1, 2004.
- Implement the use of the “structured decision making assessment tool” in the intake process. September 1, 2004.

**Indicators:****Safety:**

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Goal: 90% Federal Requirement

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**Outcome/Systemic Factor #3**

**Develop a full program policies and procedures manual. Implement training on program policies and procedures.**

- **Provide each social worker with a manual of state regulations with handbook. July 1, 2004.**
- **Provide each social worker with a county developed policies and procedures manual for uniform direction in all program matters. Begin process July 15, 2004, complete by June 30, 2005.**

**Indicators:****Safety:**

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#### FC Re-entry

Goal: 10.7%

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October 2004	
10/1/00-9/30/01	17.6%

#### Stability of Foster Care Placements

Goal: 12.2%

% with no more than 1-2 placements if still in care at 12 months.	
October 2004	
10/1/00-9/30/01	17.6%

#### Well Being:

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**Outcome/Systemic Factor #4**

**Connect and collaborate with the community child welfare service system. Become an active partner in the collaborative work of the community as they continuously work to develop new services resources and implement prevention strategies. Conduct bi-monthly collaborative meetings to address service needs in the community.**

- **Participate in the bi-monthly Team Lassen meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to:**
  - **Oversee the redesign process.**
  - **Develop a community strategy for prevention and early intervention services for children.**
  - **Develop new services for the community, “fill in the service gaps”.**
  - **Support community’s efforts of service provision. (Implement Healthy Families Homevisit America FRC program).**
- **This objective is ongoing beginning July 15, 2004.**

**Indicators:**

Recurrence of Maltreatment

Goal: 10.7%

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**Permanency:**

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**Outcome/Systemic Factor #5:****Implement a quality assurance program.**

- **Develop a quality assurance program for the CPS program and integrate it with the current system operating in the Department of Behavioral and Public Health Services. April 1, 2005.**

**Indicators:****Safety:**

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Goal: 90% Federal Requirement

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July 2004	80%
May 2004	0%

Timely Social Worker Visits.

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**Outcome/Systemic Factor #6:**

Implement a strategy to “bring our foster placements back to Lassen County.”

- Develop a plan working with the redesign group, county staff, and the Foster Family Agencies, to develop localized resources for foster care placements. Proximity to the family’s community is the goal. Begin July 15, 2004, complete process July 1, 2005.
- Develop a strength based approach to assisting families and reduce the concept of adversarial services to families. Policy implementation July 1, 2005.

**Indicators:****Safety:**

Recurrence of Maltreatment. Goal: 10.7%

Recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months after first substantiated allegation.	
October 2004	
10/1/01-9/30/02	15.4%

**Permanency:**

Exit Reunification Goal: 53.2%

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Stability of Foster Care Placements Goal: 12.2%

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**Outcome/Systemic Factor #7:**

**Implement a strategy to successfully transition foster care youth to adulthood and self-sufficiency.**

- **Develop a community collaborative response to foster care youth. Begin planning October 2004 and implement by June 2005.**
- **Include in the plan a psychological/emotional component to adulthood. Begin planning October 2004 and implement by June 2005.**

**Indicators:****Well Being:**

Children to Self Sufficiency

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<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #1:</b> Staffing.					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> As of June 2, 2004, there was no Department Director, no Department Manager, there had not been a first line supervisor for over 24 months, and only four of the eight social worker positions were filled with full time staff. There had been a 100% social worker staff turnover in the past 12 months and the highest seniority social worker had 9 months.					
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> Fill all social worker vacancies, fill Administrator position, fill Manager position, fill Supervisor position. Develop a staffing plan to adequately staff all components of the CPS program given the systemic changes implemented and the unique demographics of Lassen County. Target = reasonable caseloads.					
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> Recruit emergency staff from other disciplines and utilize multidisciplinary staffing.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Systemically change CPS system to rely on multidisciplinary teams to address children and families. Begin to integrate other disciplines and collaborate services with other delivery systems.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> Integrate Systems of Care, Drug and Alcohol, Public Health staff into appropriate roles in CPS.	<b>Timeframe</b>	July 1, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Department Director.
<b>Strategy 1. 2</b> Fast track staff recruitment with Merit System and County Personnel Department.			<b>Strategy Rationale <sup>1</sup></b> Staffing is a high priority critical factor to be able to address all of the program functions of CPS.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1.</b> All 8 social worker positions filled.	<b>Timeframe</b>	August 1, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Merit System and County Personnel Departments.

<b>Strategy 1. 3</b> Utilize consulting services to assist in recruitment.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Aggressively recruit staff from every resource available, especially target an experienced CPS Supervisor / Mentor for new staff.	
<b>Milestone 1.3.1</b> An experienced Social Worker Supervisor is on staff.		<b>Timeframe</b> July 1, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b> Community Service Solutions.
<b>Strategy 1.4</b> Develop a staffing plan to adequately staff all components of the CPS program given the systemic changes implemented and the unique demographics of Lassen County. Target = reasonable caseloads.		<b>Strategy Rationale</b> The SIP plan requires systemic changes that require additional staffing plan. In order to effectively manage the foster care placements both in bringing children back to Lassen County placements and in supporting "kinship" placements, additional staffing is needed.	
<b>Milestone 1.4.1</b> Staffing plan presented to Lassen County Board of Supervisors for approval.		<b>Time Frame</b> October 1, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b> Department Director, Deputy Director, Supervisor, and Department staff.
<b>Notes:</b> It is imperative that the staffing issue is addressed effectively.			
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> A new referral intake system needs to be implemented and CPS program structure needs to be modified into staffing for the intake process and staffing for the ongoing process.			
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Training in integration issues, roles, and coordination of disciplines.			
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> Collaborative departments supporting multidisciplinary role in CPS.			
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None.			

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #2:</b> Reorganize staff into intake and ongoing. Implement a new intake system with a multidisciplinary review/assessment of “high risk” families. Implement use of the structured decision making assessment tool throughout the program. Emphasize intake process to identify and address family needs immediately utilizing preventative / early intervention services.					
<b>County’s Current Performance:</b> As of June 2, 2004, there was inadequate CPS staff to manage intake process. The most recent May 2004 state compliance review indicated that there was a “zero” compliance rate for safety measures which reflected the intake process. Additionally, it was discovered in late June 2004 that there had been referrals “stacked” and not responded to at all.					
<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b> Meet the CDSS regulatory compliance requirements for the “safety measures”, timely response to referrals, recurrence of maltreatment, and timely social worker visits.					
<b>Strategy 2. 1</b> Implement a multidisciplinary intake system using Behavioral Health, Drug & Alcohol, Systems of Care, Public Health, etc.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Maximize and fully utilize the collaborative strength of other discipline assessment and staffing capabilities.		
Milestone	2.1.1 Multidisciplinary case reviews conducted three times a week.	Timeframe	July 1, 2004.	Assigned to	Department Director, Deputy Director, and Supervisor.
<b>Strategy 2. 2</b> Separate staff functions into “intake” and “ongoing”.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Reorganize staff to maximize their functioning and efficiency by focusing on either the intake process or the ongoing process.		
Milestone	2.2.1. Staff separated into an intake unit program function and an ongoing unit program function.	Timeframe	July 1, 2004.	Assigned to	Department Director, Deputy Director, and Supervisor.
<b>Strategy 2. 3</b> Implement the use of the “structured decision making assessment tool” in the intake process.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Provide a means of uniformly assessing all intake cases and addressing all areas of clinical concern with the cases.		
Milestone	2.3.1 Develop the policies and procedures to implement the structured decision making assessment for the intake process.	Timeframe	August 1, 2004	Assigned to	Deputy Director and Supervisor.

	<b>2.3.2</b> Train staff in use of the structured decision making assessment for intake.		August 20, 2004.		Supervisor.
	<b>2.3.3</b> All intake cases will be screened utilizing the structured decision making assessment tool.		September 1, 2004.		Supervisor.
<b>Notes:</b>					
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> The ongoing unit of FM, FR, and PP cases needs to be established.					
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> See Strategy 2.3.					
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> None.					
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None.					

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #3:</b> Develop a full program policies and procedures manual. Implement training on program policies and procedures.					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> As of June 2, 2004 there were no CPS program policies and procedures.					
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> Develop a manual of policies and procedures reflecting the CDSS regulatory program requirements for the CPS program.					
<b>Strategy 3. 1</b> Provide each social worker a manual of department/program policies and procedures for uniform direction in all program matters.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Provide consistent, uniform program policy direction to staff in the form of a policy and procedure manual. All CDSS regulatory requirements and departmental requirements will be delineated for staff in the manual.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>3.1.1</b> Contract with appropriate resources to develop the policy and procedural manual.	<b>Timeframe</b>	July 1, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Director and Deputy Director.
<b>Strategy 3. 2</b> Provide social worker staff with individual copies of the CDSS Division 31 program manual of policies and procedures.			<b>Strategy Rationale <sup>1</sup></b> Each worker will have their own reference material to access the needed regulations and policies and procedures for their job duties.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>3.2.1.</b> Copies of the CDSS Division 31 regulations distributed to each social worker.	<b>Timeframe</b>	July 15, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Community Service Solutions and Program Supervisor.
<b>Strategy 3. 3</b> Program policies and procedures begin their roll out process.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Train all staff in policies and procedures of program.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>3.3.1</b> Process begins.	<b>Timeframe</b>	July 15, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Community Service Solutions and Program Supervisor.
<b>Notes:</b> The roll out of the complete policy and procedure manual for Lassen County which includes the approval process and staff training is targeted to take one year.					

<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> None.
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Training support from other sources such as CDSS, U.C. Davis, and other organizations, may be necessary.
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> See above comment.
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None.

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #4:</b> Connect and collaborate with the community child welfare service system. Become an active partner in the collaborative work of the community as they continuously work to develop new service resources and implement prevention strategies. Conduct bi-monthly collaborative meetings to address service needs in the community.							
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> As of June 2004 the Lassen County CPS Department had been noticeably absent from the collaborative activities of the community.							
<b>Improvement Goal 4.0</b> Become an active member of collaborative efforts of the Lassen County child welfare system community.							
<b>Strategy 4. 1</b> Participate in the bi-monthly Team Lassen meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oversee the AB 636 redesign process,</li> <li>develop strategy for prevention and early intervention services for children,</li> <li>support community's efforts of service provision. (Implement Healthy Families FRC program).</li> </ul>			<b>Strategy Rationale<sup>1</sup></b> Many progressive programs and strategies have been implemented by the collaborative activities of the Lassen community. This work has been going on for the past ten years with the CPS program only intermittently being a part of the process. As a result, a disconnect has developed between the community and the CPS program. The renewed efforts at collaboration will recreate the much needed connection between the CPS program and the community stakeholders.				
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>4.1.1</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>		<b>Assigned to</b>			
	Begin participation in the AB 636 redesign community stakeholders meetings.					Beginning July 16, 2004, and ongoing.	Deputy Director.
<b>Notes:</b> Additional to participating in the stakeholders group the Department should ensure that a plan for an effective child abuse prevention council is established.							
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> None.							
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> None.							
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> See strategy comments.							



**Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.**  
None.

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #5:</b> Implement a quality assurance program.					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> As of June 2004 there is no quality assurance program in place for Lassen County CPS.					
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> There will be a quality assurance program providing program integrity oversight to the CPS program.					
<b>Strategy 5. 1</b> Develop a quality assurance program for the CPS program and integrate it with the current system operating in the Department of Behavioral and Public Health Services.				<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Program integrity is best addressed through a comprehensive quality assurance program.	
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>5.1.1</b> Design a quality assurance program for CPS.	<b>Timeframe</b>	January 1, 2004.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Director and Deputy Director.
	<b>5.1.2</b> Integrate the CPS QC program in with the Behavioral Health QC program.		April 1, 2005.		Director and Deputy Director.
<b>Notes:</b>					
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> None identified yet.					
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> None identified yet.					
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> Agency wide coordination of all QC programs.					
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None.					

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #6:</b> Implement a strategy to “bring placements back into Lassen County”.					
<b>County’s Current Performance:</b> As of June 2004 approximately 75% of the 131 children in placement in Lassen County were placed out of county. This makes it very difficult for services to be provided to the children and families and therefore makes it difficult for successful family reunification plans to be completed. CPS will change to a family strength based approach to assisting families.					
<b>Improvement Goal 6.0</b> Reduce the number of out of county placements to less than 25% of the foster care placements. Develop a policy of placement in proximity to the child’s family and community.					
<b>Strategy 6. 1</b> Develop a plan working with the county staff and the Foster Family Agencies to develop localized resources for foster care placements. Proximity to the family’s community is the goal. Develop a family oriented strength based approach to assisting families. Successful intervention requires the cooperation of the family in treating the dysfunctional system. Moving to a strength based policy increases the effectiveness of the intervention because it increases the participation of the family.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Hand in hand with this strategy is the plan to reduce overall the number of foster care placements. There is a heavy load on the foster care system currently due to the high number of foster care placements by Lassen County. Additionally, placements in proximity to the family’s community is the real goal. Due to the rural nature of Lassen County some of the community’s are actually closer to neighboring counties – in these situations it assists the family to have the place near their community even if it means in a neighboring county.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>6.1.1</b> Work in collaboration with the community stakeholders to develop a plan to increase the local resources of foster homes.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Use the AB 636 stakeholder group to develop recommendations to the Department regarding plans to increase local capacity.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Director, Deputy Director, and Community Service Solutions as facilitator of the stakeholder group.
	<b>6.1.2</b> Train staff and develop policy on family intervention.		Training and policy development to begin October 1, 2004 with completion by June 30, 2005.		Director, Deputy Director, and Supervisor.
	<b>6.1.3</b> Policy implemented on family intervention model adopted by the department.		July 1, 2005		Director, Deputy Director, and Supervisor.
	<b>6.1.4</b> Reduce the number of children in foster care.		Over the next 3 years as the redesign plan is rolled out placements should be reduced.		Director, Deputy Director, and Supervisor.
<b>Notes:</b> None.					

<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> See previous strategies that will address the overall number of children in foster care.
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> State will assist in training, U.C. Davis, and other organizations.
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> Foster Family Agencies and the prevention / early intervention providers need to be aware of these issues.
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None.

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor #7:</b> Successfully transition foster care youth to adulthood and self sufficiency.					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> "50% of the children in independent living services transitions to an identified outcome in the program. The traditional means of providing ILP services needs to be reviewed and rethought through the redesign process."					
<b>Improvement Goal 7.0</b> Lassen County should ensure all foster care youth successfully transition to adulthood and self sufficiency.					
<b>Strategy 7. 1</b> Develop a community wide collaborative system to assist foster care youth in their transition to adulthood and self sufficiency.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Child neglect and abuse is cyclic in that unless treated, children will abuse or neglect their children when they become parents. Transitioning children to adulthood successfully will help break the cycle of generational child abuse and neglect.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>7.1.1</b> Develop a community collaborative response to foster care youth.	<b>Timeframe</b>	Begin in October 2004 and develop a plan for implementation by June 2005.	<b>Assigned to</b>	Director, Deputy Director, and Community Services Solutions.
	<b>7.1.2</b> Include in the plan a psychological/emotional component to adulthood.		Begin in October 2004 and develop a plan for implementation by June 2005.		Director, Deputy Director, and Community Services Solutions.
<b>Notes:</b>					
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> Undetermined as of now.					
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Education and training is anticipated by other organizations.					
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> This will be a community collaborative effort including all of the community partners that work with youth.					
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> Undetermined as of now.					

**Lassen Board of Supervisors Report Addendum**

**September 14, 2005**

## **Addendum – Lassen System Improvement Plan**

**Clarification of Outcome Statistical Data:** The outcome data used in the Lassen System Improvement Plan is data produced quarterly by the California Department of Social Services Child Welfare Services Division. This is uniform state generated data that is reported for each county on a quarterly basis beginning January 2004. The data elements reflect the most current data the state is able to identify for each of the particular categories. Some of the data fields reflect data that is from 2002/2003 and so does not accurately reflect the current system functioning in Lassen County. The Lassen Health and Social Services Department and Community Service Solutions will be working together to develop more accurate current statistical data.

**Additionally, all data prior to July 1, 2004 does not reflect the system changes initiated by the new administration and staff. Comparisons of performance should evaluate the pre July 1, 2004 system performance data against the post July 1, 2004 system data. Efforts will be made to obtain current relevant data to accurately reflect the system functioning in Lassen County.**

In addition, for clarity purposes, the performance goals are explained in further detail and specified as “more than or less than” as the target for the system improvement plan.

### **Safety:**

**Timely Response to Referrals:** State and Federal compliance requirement, more than 90% of cases with a timely response.

- Lassen is currently at 80% as of July 31, 2004.

**Timely Monthly Social Worker Visits:** State and Federal compliance requirement, more than 90% of cases with current monthly visits.

- Lassen is currently at 85% as of July 31, 2004.

**Recurrence of Maltreatment (Recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months after first substantiated allegation):** Federal California target, less than 10.7%.

- Lassen is currently at 15.4% as of September 30, 2002 (State’s most recent data).

### **Permanency:**

**Exit to Reunification (Children who entered FC for the first time what per cent were reunified within 12 months?):** Federal California target, more than 53.2%.

- Lassen is currently at 80.9% as of September 30, 2002 (State’s most recent data).

**Foster Care to Adoption (Children who entered foster care for the first time what per cent were adopted within 24 months?):** Federal California target, more than 18%.

- Lassen is currently at 3.5% as of September 30, 2002 (State’s most recent data).

Foster Care Re-entry (% of children who re-entered foster care within 12 months of reunification.): Federal California target, less than 10.7%.

- Lassen is currently at 17.6% as of September 30, 2002 (State's most recent data).

Stability of Foster Care Placements (% of children with less than 1 or 2 placement changes in 12 months of care.): Federal California target, less than 22.2%.

- Lassen is currently at 17.6% as of September 30, 2001 (State's most recent data).

Well Being:

Children to Self Sufficiency: No Federal or State target established but the county goal is that 90% of children successfully transition to self sufficiency.

- Lassen is currently at 45% as of September 30, 2002 (State's most recent data).